

# February 2009 Newsletter

## Native Plant Society of Texas - South Texas Chapter



### Results of the January Meeting

Nine members met at the STBGNC on Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>. Listed below is a brief summary of topics discussed, events planned, and activities enjoyed.

- ◆ We decided not to renew our membership with the Corpus Christi Garden Council. The Garden Senior Center wanted to require us to submit a list of our members including phone numbers and addresses. We were not comfortable doing this. Since we will not be meeting at the Garden Senior Center, we do not have to be members of the Corpus Christi Garden Council.

- ◆ The group agreed to try quarterly activities for now, with newsletters and emails to be used to convey information between meetings. If anyone has information to send out to the group, send it to Shelly. It was agreed that the primary purpose and focus of the group was education. We will attempt to hold an activity on the last Saturday of the first month of each quarter (Jan, April, July, Oct), but will move the date if necessary.

- ◆ Events currently planned:

**February 21<sup>st</sup>** – Ernie Edmundson will be giving a seminar from 10-11:30 am at the STBGNC on “Creating Wildlife Habitat Landscapes” with native and adapted plants for birds and butterflies. A “Bird and Butterfly Walk” will be at 11:30. All members are welcome to help with the walk for seminar participants that are interested in seeing and learning names of natives.

**April 4<sup>th</sup>** – members will man (but not organize or sell) the native plant booth at the STBGNC big Bloom plant sale to provide information on how and where to grow the plants people pick out.

**July 25<sup>th</sup>** – “Native Dave” landscaping talk that had been planned for last year at the Northwest Branch Library IF both are available. Still in the planning process...

**Oct 24<sup>th</sup>** – Host a Wildscape Seminar and Plant Sale at the STBGNC. Also, still in the planning process... But if you have native volunteer plants in your yard that you could pot up and donate to the sale, please start now.

- ◆ Rhoda Poenisch agreed to be our chapter president.

- ◆ We wandered along the Nature trail IDing plants to label. We also viewed the area for the new native garden.

### Do You Know Your Natives???

Contributed by: USDA-NRCS Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center



Erect dayflower (*Commelina erecta* var. *angustifolia*) is a perennial, warm-season, herbaceous forb. A member of the spiderwort (Commelinaceae) family, erect dayflower has also been known by the common names of widow's tears (Lehman, O'Brien, & White, 2005) and hierba del pollo (Correl & Johnston, 1996). There are six species of *Commelina* that occur in Texas and three occur in South Texas (Correl & Johnston, 1996). There are currently three varieties of *Commelina erecta* found in Texas: var. *erecta*, *Deamiana*, and *angustifolia* (Correl & Johnston, 1996). The variety *angustifolia* is native to South Texas (Lehman, O'Brien, & White, 2005).

Erect dayflower can grow in both sandy and clayey soils in almost all habitats (Ajilvsge, 1991). It can be found from Wisconsin south to Arizona and Florida,

west to Wyoming, and in the Eastern two-thirds of Texas. Erect dayflower blooms from March to December in Texas (Jones, 1982). The showy blue flower is attractive, but ephemeral, closing early in the day. Occasionally populations will have both blue and lighter colored flowers. The flower consists of three petals, two larger and of equal size and a third petal that is very small or absent. The flower structure inspired Linnaeus to name the plant for the three Commelin brothers, Dutch botanists, two well published and one relatively unknown (Ajilvsgi, 1991). The stems are succulent and topped with a boat shaped spathe from which the flowers emerge (Ajilvsgi, 1991). Erect dayflower starts out erect, becoming decumbent as it matures (Correll & Johnston, 1996). Erect dayflower is said to be an important food source for white-tailed deer. Quail, white-winged doves, and mourning doves eat the seeds (Everitt, Drawe, & Lonard, 1999).

**Info Sources:** *Manual of the Vascular Plants of Texas* - Correll and Johnston; *Plants of the Texas Coastal Bend* - Lehman, O'Brien, & White; *Field Guide to the Broad-Leaved Herbaceous Plants of South Texas* – Everitt, Drawe, & Lonard; *Wildflowers of Texas* – Geyata Ajilvagi; and research performed at the PMC.



**Upcoming Events** (361) 852-2100 [www.ccbotanicalgardens.org](http://www.ccbotanicalgardens.org)

- ◆ **“Bulbs you don’t have to Dig Up” March 14** - Master Gardener John Gilbreath, who specializes in daylily and amaryllis gardens, will tell you which bulb plants you don’t have to dig up for the winter, and share hints about their long-term care, at a seminar from 10 to noon. Class fee is \$6 (\$3.50 members). Call for reservations.
- ◆ **“Hot New Plants & Perennial Favorites” March 21, 10 a.m. to noon** - Landscape designer Kathy Hubner, Gill’s Landscape Nursery, discusses both tried-and-true favorite perennials, and the newest plants on the market--for color and curb appeal. Class fee is \$6 (\$3.50 members). Call for reservations.
- ◆ **Rainwater Harvesting Workshop March 28<sup>th</sup>** - Held from 9:30 to 3:30 pm. A lecture in the Visitors Center begins the day, followed by students constructing their own take-home rainwater harvesting barrels in the Rose Pavilion. Workshop fee is \$20 per student. To register, call Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 361-767-5217.
- ◆ **Orchid Novice Class, April 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Meeting the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. on a continuing basis, the orchid class series—taught by Orchid Curator Sam Jones—covers varieties, culture, care, climate, and acquisition. Jones’ book, *Orchid Culture for the Novice*, as well as a selection of orchids, may be purchased at the class. No reservations necessary. For more information, call 361/854-7624.
- ◆ **BIG BLOOM! Plant sale & gardening festival April 4<sup>th</sup>** - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors will be admitted for \$1 each. Shoppers are asked to bring their own plant wagons. Among plants for sale will be orchids, plumeria, bromeliads, native plants, other water-saving blooming landscape plants, tropicals . . . plus plants, yard, patio and other nature-related decor from approximately 30 vendors. Nueces Master Gardeners, who help with BIG BLOOM staging, will be on site that day to answer shoppers’ horticulture questions. Call for information.

#### BIG BLOOM SCHEDULE

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|----------|---|
| 8        | Membership Table opens                      |
| 8-9      | Early shopping for members only             |
| 9-5      | BIG BLOOM, Garden Shoppe, Moon Jump open    |
| 10-11:30 | Curby--the walking, talking Recycling Robot |
| 11       | Ladybeetle Release--Sensory Garden          |
| 1        | Ladybeetle Release--Hummingbird Garden      |
| 3        | Ladybeetle Release--Rose Garden             |
- ◆ **“Orchids with Sam” Seminar April 11<sup>th</sup>** - This seminar will offer orchid basics from Gardens & Nature Center Curator Sam Jones! Seminar fee is \$6 (\$3.50 members). Call for reservations.
  - ◆ **“Adding Splashes to your Landscape” April 18<sup>th</sup>** - Seminar from 10 a.m. to noon where members of the Coastal Bend Water Garden Club will share their knowledge about creating and maintaining water features. Workshop cost is \$6 (\$3.50 members). Call for reservations.
  - ◆ **The Curandera’s Garden—Fact & Folklore seminar April 25<sup>th</sup>** - Centuries of fascinating stories and tradition will be discussed from 10 am to noon. Frank Fergoso, owner of Tex-Mex Curios, will share tales of typical food and medicinal plants historically grown in Mexican gardens. Seminar fee is \$6 (\$3.50 members). Call for reservations.

**Coastal Bend Bays Foundation Calendar**    [www.baysfoundation.org](http://www.baysfoundation.org)    361-882-3439

- ◆ **Feb 21**, 9am, TX General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach, join CBBF at Redfish Bay, Lighthouse Lakes Park.
- ◆ **April 18**, 10am, EARTH DAY BAY DAY. Register today!

**NPSOT Calendar 2009**

- ◆ **February 21<sup>st</sup>** - Bird and Butterfly Walk at 11:30 at the STBGNC
- ◆ **April 4<sup>th</sup>** – Native plant booth at the STBGNC big Bloom plant sale
- ◆ **Apr 18<sup>th</sup>** NPSOT State Board Meeting in Wichita Falls (all board meetings open to all members)
- ◆ **Jul 18<sup>th</sup>** NPSOT State Board Meeting in Fredericksburg - Gillespie County Historical Society bldg., 312 W. San Antonio (next to NPSOT state office)
- ◆ **July 25<sup>th</sup>** – “Native Dave” landscaping talk **IF AVAILABLE**
- ◆ **Oct 15-18<sup>th</sup>** NPSOT State Fall Symposium in Wichita Falls (also State Board Meeting)
- ◆ **Oct 24<sup>th</sup>** Wildscape Seminar at the STBGNC

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**State Web Site**    [www.npsot.org](http://www.npsot.org)